support Centre in the USA, which is operational since November, 1999, to promote business for STP units and provide marketing support to SMEs.

Statement-II

The opportunity for Software and Service Sector by 2008

	Total Market	Export
IT Services	$38.5 bn	$23 bn
Software Products	$19.5 bn	$8 bn
IT Enabled Services	$19.0 bn	$15 bn
E-Business	$10.0 bn	$4 bn
TOTAL	$87.0 bn	$50 bn

Simputer for Poor People

3440. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India has developed "Simputer", a low cost alternative to PC for the first time in the world;

(b) if so, the salient features of "Simputer" and how is it going to help the poor people; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by his Ministry to penetrate into the village?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) Simputer is low cost hand held computing device with in-built multiple connectivity options. It is modular and based on Linux Operating System, The Simputer has been developed by some Faculty Members of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, and a commercial company called Encore Software Ltd. It's cost is estimated to be US $ 200 (Rs. 9,000/-) when produced in large volumes. It speaks (using Text to Speach) in several Indian Languages and uses the Smart Card technology, allowing it to be shared within a community or village, lent by a shopkeeper or an office on rental basis. Pro-poor applications such as micro banking, metre reading, inventory records etc. are envisaged to be possible at an affordable price. Similar systems with some comparable features and performance are being developed elsewhere in the world as well. Development

of Simputer in India at present is at the level of Beta prototype testing.

(c) The Ministry of IT is considering steps to ensure protection of the invention/intellectual property in terms of Trade Mark, Patent or copyrights. The MIT is also proposing to consider the Simputer and a similar low-cost computer (as a Janata PC), as the hardware "engines" providing indigenously developed devices for addressing the digital divide.

Privatisation of CMC

3441. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to privatise CMC;

(b) if so, the details thereof and reasons therefor; and

(c) the benefits Government anticipate to derive *vis-a-vis* the future prospects for IT trainees?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Disinvestment in CMC Ltd. is based on the policy of the Government that in generality of case, the Government shareholding in Public Sector Enterprises will be brought down to 26% or below in Public Sector Enterprises operating in non-strategic areas.

(c) The disinvestment will, *inter-alia,* help the company to have a flexible management and freedom to raise additional capital from the market. In the process the company will also expand its activities in diverse areas of its operation. This expansion is anticipated to generate demand for large number of IT trained professionals.

Employment to Unemployed Youths

3442. SHRI YADLAPATI VENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state the steps taken to provide employment to unemployed youths during 2001-02 in view of rise in unemployment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL): To generate productive employment priority has been accorded to sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are labour intensive, in regions characterized by higher rates of unemployment and under-employmetf